

socialist standard

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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement

The throne behind the power



How the royals interfere in government



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Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join the Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.



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Editorial

The *Spidergate* Chronicles

FUTURE HEADS of state on both sides of the Atlantic have been hitting the headlines this month. In the US, the presidential election is forging ahead, full of fanfare, hoopla, moral combat, insincere promises and, of course, 'economic analysis'. The whole shebang is well on its way to an underwhelming denouement in the inauguration of the 45th caretaker of US capitalism.

Less feverishly, Charles Windsor, future head of both British and (bizarrely) Canadian states, has been caught in the media's headlights (again). Charles, of course, needs no Big Top and election razzmatazz to invest him with power and privilege, only the family circus and his mum's approval, signalled by the popping of her royal clogs. Recent journalistic digging, though, has unearthed just how much power and privilege the dusty corridors of Clarence House still retain. The noble prince, it seems, has been caught with his hands in the cookie jar rifling the 'estates' of Cornish commoners who die without heirs - as is his perfect right, apparently. Silver spoons are not enough to satisfy the controversial princeling. Nor even cookies, it seems. Now we have Spidergate, the prince's dark attempts to influence power by writing to the PM - forbidden fruit for the monarchy. And we learn, too, of his ability to veto legislation through the royal prerogative, an institution as potent and mysterious as the orb and sceptre themselves.

Meanwhile, down in the sink estates, ghettos and no-go areas of the urban poor, where lurk dangerous ne'er-do-wells and benefit fraudsters waiting to mug the economy and

deprive well-fed, citizens of their hard-earned privileges (how could we doubt you, Mr Pickles?) - in these mean streets, few cookie jars can be seen gleaming in the lamplight. In the depths of depression and austerity, belts are tightening, homelessness is rising and pay-day loan sharks are on the prowl for desperate families trying to keep the kids warm and fed.

And why? The owners of capital are on an investment strike: too few cookies are available to tempt them back into making profits, and even fewer crumbs than usual are falling from their tables for the rest of us. What to do? In a moment of distraction, Captain Cameron and George, his loyal bursar, have been seen rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic. Not that British Capitalism is going under - far from it. The ship may be holed and sitting low in the water, but she's a sturdy vessel. And her buoyancy chambers are soundly maintained by workers loyal to the owners' interests. Like the Titanic disaster, though, this latest plunge into recession is claiming victims in steerage as several thousand pensioners are calculated to die of hypothermia this winter in the UK as surely as the Titanic's passengers perished in the icy waters of the Atlantic.

So, in place of a socially responsible and fulfilling life, it's more bread and circuses for the rest of us: we can drown out our worries with the noisy clatter of Mitt and Barak in the gladiatorial arena or the sight of Charles sneaking down to the kitchen at midnight, looking for the Jaffa cakes. Bring on the clowns.

Bodging the badger debate



Whatever is all this fuss about badgers and the government's badger cull in aid of? As if there aren't bigger things to worry about. Socialists are not often accused of being sentimental animal-lovers, but don't the anti-cull lobby have a point? Scientific surveys

have shown that badger culls reduce TB in cattle herds by around 25 percent in the infected area, but *increase* TB by 25 percent outside the infected area due to the 'perturbation' effect of badger refugees running away in all directions from the shotguns. The 2007 survey concluded that closer monitoring of cattle would achieve more than badger culling, so what's the point of the cull, apart from giving the huntin', shootin' and fishin' brigade something fun to do now that they can't chase foxes and hang peasants?

Some commentators argue that the farmers are exaggerating the problem anyway, since there is no danger to humans thanks to the milk pasteurising process, and there have been virtually no proper studies of the actual cost of bovine TB to the livestock industry. Badgers, after all, are a protected species. You can't just bang away at them with a twelve bore for no reason.

If for the sake of argument we presupposed a meat and dairy industry in socialism on the same scale as now, which is a rather large and shaky assumption, this is a good example of a hot topic socialists might be having. Naturally we would hope and expect the culling question to be settled by the science, rather than sentiment. We needn't worry that the ground was being muddled by covert class antagonisms between country squire and townie prole, or about quasi-legal questions of who exactly 'owns' a wild animal, whether it is all of us in some abstract way, or the private owner of the specific tract of land upon which the animal resides.

The problem arises when the science is inconclusive. A more recent survey, for example, confirms the 'perturbation' effect, but notes that the spread of TB outside the target area is actually quite short-lived. The ideal solution would be to vaccinate the cattle but no such vaccine yet exists. There is a vaccine for badgers, but the problem is catching the buggers and then being able to tell which ones are vaccinated and which ones aren't, since they both present the same antibodies.

Evidence from New Zealand shows persuasively that culling works. It reduced incidence of TB by up to 83 percent, and significantly, when it was suspended due to lack of money, the incidence shot right back up again. But they were culling possums, not badgers, and the behaviour patterns of infected possums were shown to contribute to their effectiveness as a disease vector. In short, just because it works in New Zealand with possums doesn't necessarily mean it'll work in Britain with badgers.

The culls in New Zealand were also helped apparently by the fact that the possum is not an iconic animal immortalised in some Kiwi version of *Wind in the Willows*, but actually a pest that nobody likes. Many pro-cullers have pointed out that nobody would be making a fuss about these culls if it were a question of rats rather than badgers, and that this sort of 'fluffy bunny' thinking is

what is really behind the 'scientific' objections. However, they themselves don't care to point out that if badger culling works because badgers are the main TB vector in some areas, then deer culling should also be done because deer are the main vectors in others. Nobody wants a Save Our Bambi media storm on their hands. Even in America, home of the deer hunter, they shy away from deer culls for this reason, instead surreptitiously making hunting licences cheaper and hoping the weekend NRA nuts will do the job for them. Meanwhile, it's a wonder that the Berkshire Hunt hasn't trumpeted the fact that foxes can also be carriers.

Press articles on the subject argue that the science won't persuade anyone because it's a moral issue, which if true is unfortunate since most objectors are meat and dairy consumers and therefore somewhat morally compromised in this area. Other moral questions such as abortion are similarly not clarified by scientific considerations. In socialism, if there are such debates, we can only say that where the science is unable to make a conclusive case, the decision will have to be taken with a show of hands, whether they are fluffy bunnies' hands or not.

The dark side of the coin

Such is the alienating world of commodity relations that many people in rich countries don't seem to care much about other human beings, for all that they can be reduced to blubbering sentimental wrecks over whales, badgers or trees. Well, if human solidarity doesn't motivate them, perhaps this will. A new report reveals that up to 90 percent of tropical deforestation is not conducted by governments or licensed commercial corporations, but by the mafia. Organised crime, it turns out, controls up to 30 percent of the global timber trade (*New Scientist*, 6 October).

It's surprisingly rarely that socialists are asked 'what we would do about the mafia'. This is largely because the reality of organised crime does not impinge very much on the public consciousness, for all its petty, Daily Mail obsessions with muggers and benefit frauds. Organised criminals operate outside the state regulatory apparatus, or inside states with no regulatory apparatus. They are responsible for global slavery, which the naive imagine was long ago abolished. They are responsible for counterfeit medicines which form up to 50 percent of the African market. They are responsible for wholesale and reckless fly-tipping of toxic poisons into landfill, paid for by construction and manufacturing companies who find it cheaper not to ask questions. They slaughter protected species for the tables of exclusive restaurants, engage in organ trade for rich invalids, kidnap children for wealthy childless couples, and incidentally, bulldoze rainforests.

If capitalism can be represented by a silver coin held up to the light, then it has a shiny side that we all see, and a dark side that we don't. Inevitably we all tend to talk about the shiny side, with its democratic institutions and ethical concepts, its science and culture, carelessly forgetting that this is only half the story. What happens on the dark side is obscure, largely unreported, the stuff of Hollywood myth and legend. To look on this dark side is in a sense to look into our history, to see the truly ugly nature of the profit-motive at work, without any mitigating factors.

Technically speaking, organised crime is capitalism's problem, not ours. It couldn't exist if we abolished private property, any more than bank robbers could exist without banks. But while it does exist, we should remember that it is there, in the dark, a major player in world economies, as anti-human and anti-worker as they come, capitalism's ghostly and demonic twin.

Sport and the spirit of capitalism

Today the scandal in professional cycling is doping: a hundred years ago it was racism.

Traditionally, things have tended to be difficult for the American athlete who happens also to be black. Jesse Owens, snubbed by his own President, had to travel to the 1936 Berlin Olympiad for the 'warmest ovation of his life' – and a friendly wave from the Fuhrer himself – whilst a young Cassius Clay, disgusted by his homecoming reception some 24 years later, reportedly consigned his Rome Olympic Gold to the muddy depths of the Ohio. Practically unknown today, although in his time as famous as Owens or Clay, is cyclist Major Taylor. Why?

In the couple of decades straddling the turn of the twentieth century, cycling was as hugely popular in the USA as baseball or boxing. Before the arrival of the motor car and aeroplane, it was effectively the world's fastest sport with its own galaxy of highly-paid superstars, drawn mainly from the 'artisan classes'. However, as the century progressed this popularity steadily diminished until, by the outbreak of World War Two, it had sunk into almost total oblivion; its traditions and gladiators – particularly its black ones – forgotten.

Marshall 'Major' Taylor – as a performing trick-cycling youngster, he sported a mock-military tunic – was born into rural Indianan poverty in 1878, his slave parents having crossed into freedom from Kentucky. Effectively adopted by a wealthy white family as companion to their only son, he spent several happy years during which he was treated, and encouraged to view himself, as racially equal. Taylor was, therefore, no Jim Crow-era 'uppity nigger', never having been a 'downity' one in the first place.

Such lifestyle gave him access to the unheard-of luxury of a bicycle, upon which machine, when he duly returned, aged thirteen, to his birth family, he displayed such prodigious competitive prowess that, allied with his acrobatic skills, he was able to turn professional some five years later.

World champion

His rise thereafter was meteoric. Within a couple of years he had won both national and world titles, broken and re-broken no fewer than seven world records – and all in the face of appalling racial hostility. With cycling's then governing body, the League of American Wheelmen attempting an outright colour ban to supplement prevailing member antipathy, Taylor experienced frequent difficulty both entering events – and then exiting them in one piece. Under the noses of prejudiced officials, he was routinely

fouled and assaulted, at best having to single-handedly overcome the combined efforts of the entire field. Spectators and journalists, however, loved this gutsy, stylish rider – 'the few hissed: the many cheered' – and promoters, recognising his box office appeal, welcomed him.

A devout Baptist, Taylor's refusal to compete on Sundays effectively precluded further world titles and when physically attacked his response,



Marshall 'Major' Taylor

invariably, was to turn the other cheek – and simply pedal a bit faster. Over several years he was, unquestionably, the best short-distance cyclist on the planet, idolised throughout Europe and the Antipodes, practically unbeatable in fair competition.

Retiring in 1910, Taylor, like so many sportsmen, struggled with life-beyond-adrenalin. He entered the fledgling motor trade but proved a better cyclist than businessman. Ever-generous and charitable, his fortune slowly evaporated, his marriage foundered, his health collapsed and dying penniless in Chicago in 1932, his unclaimed corpse was accorded a segregated pauper's burial.

So much for 'sport' within class-divided, socially fractured society. In truth, how could it be otherwise? With life for billions a constant struggle for basic economic subsistence or paltry reward – a rat race – its recreational elements must surely reflect this. Where winning, acquiring, surviving are the overriding imperatives, then cheating, shortcutting, colluding will inevitably follow. And anyway, the race itself is pretty well fixed – odds fiddled, running order predetermined, from boudoir (parked Bentley or park bench) to battleground (boardroom or building site).

When the rat race is over

What then, when humanity has finally transcended the rat race? With the world's resources now the common heritage how will societal attitudes towards sport have altered and in what ways might the calibre of performance have been affected? Will there actually be competitive sport?

The great post-war Australian coach, Percy Cerutti once averred that the finest athletic displays he ever witnessed were in Aboriginal communities where, uncluttered with and unfettered by what he called 'Western values' and religious hang-ups, participants deported themselves with a natural elegance and fleetness of foot, and could endure levels of pain and suffering well beyond those of their 'civilized' counterparts.

Replicating that in a concrete stadium would, however, have been problematic. Chucking a spear across an empty field, jumping in triplicate into a pit of sand, lumbering endlessly around a plastic track with neither tasty kangaroo up front nor hungry crocodile behind to stimulate the pace? And what use would a communistic tribesman have had for a gold medal except to dangle it on his didgeridoo?

Such issues will be, of course, for society's members – locally, globally, varyingly – to settle. Many will doubtless see sport purely as a means of healthy exercise and recreation whether strenuous and vigorous or painstaking and skilful; others may prefer to merely spectate or do nothing.

Some competitive elements and means of recording may well of course linger: football retaining its goalposts and referees, athletics its measuring tapes and stopwatches, judo its belt and points systems, but gone surely will be the all-pervading need to defeat, vanquish and rout: the tackle above the ball, the punch below the belt, the bouncer, the beamer and the hypodermic. Imagine: the Corinthian Spirit restored; amateurism regaining its true meaning and status within sport – and beyond. Imagine: world festivals replacing international competitions; sport for sport's sake. Imagine too: divisive national flags recycled into cleaning mops; chauvinistic anthems supplanted by...*Imagine*.

And if some future Major Taylor is observed swooping around a velodrome with a posse of somewhat paler gentlemen in his wake, there will be no question whatsoever of bullwhip or hood: he'll simply be pedalling a wee bit faster.

ANDREW ARMITAGE



What the Butler Saw

*THE laws of God, the laws of man,
He may keep that will and can;
Not I: let God and man decree
Laws for themselves and not for me;
And if my ways are not as theirs
Let them mind their own affairs.
Their deeds I judge and much condemn,
Yet when did I make laws for them?*

SO WROTE A E Housman and he makes a fair point, particularly in relation to the 'laws of God'. While 'the laws of man', at least in a country with an element of democracy, can be debated and repealed 'The laws of God' are absolute, imposed directly from heaven. And when they're broken the authority for passing sentence and punishment is entrusted to whichever Holy Joe is looking after God's interests in that corner of the world.

Paolo Gabriele, the Pope's butler, who says he was 'inspired by the Holy Spirit to root out evil and corruption' in the Vatican by leaking a stash of embarrassing facts to a journalist, was given an 18-month prison sentence for his trouble. He really should have ignored the Holy Spirit's inspiration here. The Vatican has its own police force, the Vatican Gendarmerie, its own court and its own judges to keep the servants in order and prevent embarrassing secrets being leaked. What the butler actually saw and how much is still under wraps we'll probably never know. The judges refused to admit some of the key evidence in the trial.

But it's not only Paolo Gabriele who's been spilling the beans about dodgy doings in the Vatican. A prominent catholic theologian, Hans Kung, has been calling for a

'revolution from below' to unseat the Pope and the Catholic hierarchy which he says is corrupt and lacking credibility.

He has described the church as an 'authoritarian system' with parallels to Germany's Nazi dictatorship.

'He has developed a peculiar pomposity' he says of the Pope. 'He's frequently to be seen wrapped in golden splendour and swank'. 'He wears the crown of a nineteenth-century pope and has even had the garments of the Medici pope Leo X remade for him'. 'The Vatican is no different from the Kremlin,' he said. 'Just as Putin as a secret service agent became the head of Russia, so Ratzinger, as head of the Catholic Church's secret services, became head of the Vatican'.

Kung is no stranger to controversy in the wacky world of Catholicism. In 1979 he was stripped of the authority to teach Catholic theology by Pope John Paul II for questioning the concept of papal infallibility (*Guardian*, 5 October).

Things can certainly turn ugly when these religious drama queens fall out. The Pope's butler though can be thankful that it was not the Taliban's version of God's laws in Pakistan that he broke.

On 9 October Malala Yousafzai, a 14 year-old schoolgirl in the town of Mingora in Pakistan where since 2009 the Tehrik-i-Taliban regime has been trying to ban girls from attending school, was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt. Her crime was writing a blog promoting her views on education for girls and detailing her life under the Taliban. A Taliban spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, confirmed that she had been the target and called her crusade for education rights an 'obscenity'.



NW

Brief Reports

NICK CLEGG has urged the Liberal Democrats to show 'courage and vision' by not sacking him. The call comes after his apology for failing to fulfil his pre-election promise to fight any increase in university tuition fees. Mr Clegg also said there could be 'no question' of further lowering the top income tax rate of 45 percent, which will come into force next April, 'and you can take my word for it'. A spokesman for the CBI, the bosses' union, reported that his members were 'jubilant' at the news, and many were already splashing out on extra yachts in anticipation of the further tax cuts.

MINISTERS NEED to choose their special advisers carefully or they may end up in situations worthy of the BBC satire *The Thick of It*, MPs have said. The TV series, which is basically Yes Minister! with swearing, highlights the role of dodgy special advisers or Spads, temporary government employees who are not bound by the same rules of impartiality as civil servants and who may be following their own agenda. Recent scandals have shown spads to be deceitful, venal, corrupt and incompetent. Labour leader Ed Miliband and Prime Minister David Cameron are both former special advisers.

IN THE wake of the Lance Armstrong drug scandal, the company Peddle-It.com has launched a new performance enhancer called Placebonite, which it says is guaranteed to be a top seller: 'The industry dilemma

is that none of the legal products work, while all the ones that do work are illegal. In fact, for a product to work would necessarily make it illegal. You can't stop athletes pumping themselves with something, so we're giving them the perfect product. It's legal, and they think it works, so it does!' Economics analysts are studying sales, with a view to applying the rationale to other areas, like economics.

UNEMPLOYMENT FELL by 50,000 to 2.53 million between June and August, official figures show, as more people died, left the country or went off benefit to become burglars. 'It's proof that the government's policy is working', said a spokesman for the DWP, 'People would rather turn to crime than endure the abuse we dish out in the Work Programme.' The figures follow the announcement of a new government scheme to employ disabled people as motorway bollards.

THE 'WORST may still be ahead' for the banking system, the Bank of England's deputy governor has told a gathering of leading bankers. Paul Tucker said reserves held by banks were still not calibrated for the 'end-of-the-world risks' that remained a possibility: 'If you're buying that yacht, now might be a good moment to fit it out for a long sea voyage. There are lots of islands going cheap in the Caribbean.'



From lame ducks to zombies

APOLOGISTS FOR capitalism are quite cruel to firms that don't make a profit or not enough profit. In the 1970s they were called 'lame ducks'. In the harsher climate of today they are called 'zombies'. Lame ducks can be left to die, but zombies have to be killed.

'HELP,' read the headline of an article by the *Times* Business Editor, David Wighton, on 19 September, 'ZOMBIES ARE ATTACKING THE RECOVERY' He was discussing a theory put forward by some economists as to why 'employment is strong but output is weak and investment sluggish'. According to them, given that 'output is still more than 4 per cent down on its peak in 2008', unemployment ought to be higher than it actually is. That it isn't, they suggest, is because not enough firms have gone bankrupt when they should have done:

'These corporate zombies are so weighed down with debts to banks and their own pension funds that they are barely alive. But, as in the movies, they are hard to kill.'

'... zombie businesses may have enough cash coming through the door to stay alive but not enough to thrive. They simply don't have the money to invest in long-term growth.'

In other words, these are firms that are still making a profit but not enough. Normally, says Wighton, they would go under:

'In normal downturns these companies would be subject to the forces of 'creative destruction' that drive market capitalism. The undead would be restructured, with debt written off, or broken up with their assets sold to other businesses that could afford to make better use of them. Many would die and be reborn as much healthier businesses.'

This is indeed one of the things that happen in a slump to create the conditions for a recovery. Unprofitable firms go bankrupt and their assets pass cheaply to others. In Marxist terms, this is capital getting devalued, which means that with the same income the rate of profit is raised, which is a must for a recovery. Insofar as government action prevents this – and Wighton mentions that the current very low interest rates have allowed firms to keep up with their interest payments even though they have no chance of repaying the loan – it would delay any recovery.

Wighton's economists want the zombie firms to be killed off but are afraid that the politicians won't be ruthless enough and will allow these firms to stagger on, leading to what happened in Japan in the 1990s, its so-called 'lost decade' of stagnation.

Could they be right? The argument is plausible in terms of the way the capitalist economy works. If not so much capital is devalued in a slump then restoring the rate of profit risks taking that much longer. If they are right, the choice capitalism has to offer in the immediate future is either more closures, more redundancies and more unemployment or a prolonged period of stagnation. Some prospect! And further proof that capitalism has nothing to offer the majority class of wage and salary workers and their dependants.

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Coal mining insanity

Public Integrity, black lung disease in coal miners has quadrupled since the 1980s and doubled since 2002. The doubling coincided with an increase of 600 hours in the work year of the average miner. Over 10,000 miners died of the disease in 1985-94 in the Appalachians alone.

There is no treatment for black lung disease. At its final stage – ‘massive fibrosis’ – even mild exertion causes disabling oxygen deprivation. Victims say they can either eat or breathe, but not both at the same time.

The coal seams in old mines have thinned, and the companies extract seams down to one inch thick. These thin seams are often embedded in quartz rock with a high silica content, which generates dust even more deadly than coal dust.

Hiding the dust

In 1960 Congress passed a law to regulate dust levels in mines. But Big Coal and its bought politicians – such as the late Senator Robert Byrd, who cynically called himself ‘the coal miner’s friend’ – weakened its safety provisions to keep down costs for the companies. They seek to protect corporate profits, not workers’ health. Miners are expendable and can readily be replaced, perhaps at even lower wages, from the ‘reserve army of the unemployed’.

The main weakness of the law as passed is that it lets the companies police themselves. A government inspector cannot enter a mine while production is underway – and that is 24 hours a day! – without the company’s prior consent. When the dust level readings taken by the company disagree with those taken by the inspector, the company is allowed to take definitive new readings at five locations chosen by itself.

Weak as the law is, it is often broken. During the last decade mining companies were cited with over 53,000 violations. Fewer than 1,000 resulted in court action.

Waste stream

In February 2011 the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* published a report by scientists from several US universities, entitled ‘Full Cost Accounting for the Life Cycle of Coal’. The authors found that each stage in the life cycle of coal – extraction, transport, processing, combustion – generates a waste stream that poses multiple hazards to health and the environment.

Thus, the release of Coal Combustion Waste (CCW), also known as fly ash, by burning coal exposes people to toxic chemicals and heavy metals known to cause cancer, birth defects, reproductive disorders, neurological damage, learning disabilities, kidney disease and diabetes.

The coal companies do not pay these ‘external’ costs and therefore ignore them. The scientists estimate

the annual cost to the US public as at least a third of a trillion dollars, possibly over half a trillion. Accounting for the damage caused by coal gives a ‘full social cost’ double or triple the ‘economic cost’ of generating electricity from coal. Measured against this benchmark, wind, solar and other non-hydrocarbon energy sources are far cheaper than coal.

Greenhouse gas emissions

The authors found that burning coal produces 50 percent more emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂ – the main greenhouse gas) than combustion of an equivalent amount of oil and double the CO₂ emissions from burning an equivalent amount of natural gas.

Coal also contains mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic, manganese, beryllium, chromium, and other toxic and carcinogenic substances that are released into the environment during combustion. Finally, the crushing and processing of coal release tons of tiny particles every year that contaminate the water, air and soil, with consequent harm to health and the biosphere.

Methane is also released in the process of coal mining. It is a greenhouse gas 25 times more powerful than CO₂. Even when methane decays it yields CO₂ – a lose-lose situation.

Mountaintop Removal

The coal companies make wide use of Mountaintop Removal (MTR) in the Appalachians. To get at the coal inside a mountain, they use explosives to blast away the summit, together with the forest covering it. The resulting rubble or ‘spoil’ is dumped into the valleys below.

MTR has been used at about 500 sites in four states (Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee), burying 2,000 miles of streams and despoiling 1.4 million acres of scenic natural terrain. In Kentucky alone there are 293 MTR sites, with over 1,400 miles of streams damaged or destroyed and 2,500 more miles polluted.

This reckless vandalism is directed against a region whose rich biodiversity is second only to that of the tropics. The Southern Appalachian Mountains are home to the greatest variety of salamanders in the world, with 18 percent of all known species.

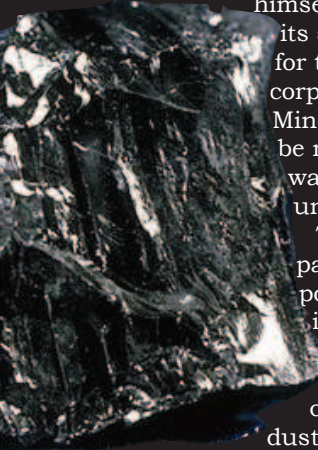
Just say no!

In view of the massive social costs associated with coal mining and the availability of less destructive energy sources, this industry would be a thing of the past if the government, with its monopoly on violence, were not in collusion with Big Business — in this case, the coal companies.

There is not and never was any such thing as a ‘free market’. Government, with its law-making, courts, and self-sustaining monopoly on violence, is necessary to camouflage the tremendous imbalance between the classes and create the illusion of a society of normal human relations.

If we all, every working class person, just said no, we don’t want this anymore, it would be a first step towards the means of life passing into our hands so we could stop the insane forms of capitalist production that have been destroying our world for over centuries.

JOE HOPKINS





Contrickery in conference

LOCKED, BOLTED and barred with every spoken syllable and gesture weighed and scrutinised, the annual conferences of the big political parties are not what they used to be. There was a time when the attending members, taking pride in themselves

as delegates, could have hoped that their agenda items, after being amended, composited and generally sanitised, might have borne some relation to the professed policy of their party, or when events scheduled as debates might have aroused some passion or indignation about world famine or dictatorships or devastating war. It is not like that now: 'Borderline tedium' was how one observer put it.

This year Conservative Party members might have travelled home from their conference in a glow of satisfaction, under the impression that their doubts about the government had been noticed. As when Cameron defiantly laid it down that no one should feel bad about having been to Eton: 'I say yes I went to a great school and I want every child to have a great education. I'm not here to defend privilege. I'm here to spread it'. Except that privilege is nothing if not exclusive – as comprehensive pupils will realise if they ever have to play in their school's version of the Eton Wall Game. As when the new Justice Minister, Christopher Grayling, thumped his tub to announce the replacement of Ken Clarke's Rehabilitation Revolution by Rougher Retribution. As when Eric Pickles paraded his plans to obstruct the union activities of local authority workers on the grounds that this will make the unions stronger.

Clumsy Clegg

The LibDems no longer alert us about global warming or the dangers of eating non-organic food, which, to anyone interested in political matters, was only mildly irritating. Now they are preoccupied with their agonised wrestling to keep their place on the same side of the Commons as Cameron's Tories while plugging the gaps left by those infamously dishonoured election pledges. Their method has been to placate the outraged voters while avoiding the question of why any of their future promises should be believed. This wretched come-down dominated their conference, not alleviated by Nick Clegg and his fumbling efforts to divert attention from their exposure: 'There is a better, more meaningful future waiting for us. Not as a third party, but as one of the parties of government... Stop looking in the rear-view mirror as we journey from the party of opposition that we were, to the party of government we are becoming'.

False Images

But those images in Clegg's rear-view mirror could not have inspired the LibDems as examples for the future. Such as: 'I see generations of Liberals marching towards the sound of gunfire' – a phrase first offered by the charmingly mannered Old Etonian, Jo Grimond, their leader from November 1956 to January 1967. Under Grimond the Liberals were on the rise, for example, winning the safe Tory seat of Orpington in 1958 but then declined. In July 1976 David Steel took over, offering the party some hope with his livelier style, and for a while this seemed to bear fruit, but in March 1977 Steel stuffed them into an uncomfortable alliance with Callaghan's Labour government,

and when this failed to keep Labour in power in 1988 he managed the merger with the discredited Gang of Four's SDP. However, there was persistent enmity between Steel and the SDP's leader David Owen, a symptom of which was Steel agreeing to a joint policy document without having read it. This year a triumphant Clegg told the conference that Paddy Ashdown will head the party's general election team – the same Paddy Ashdown whose failure to improve the party's prospects came to an end with his resignation 1992. None of these men in the rear-view mirror succeeded in raising the Liberals to the point when they could be seen as an alternative government for British capitalism. When Clegg proclaimed to the conference that the LibDems stand for 'a fair, free and open society,' he was offering just another pledge, to be judged by the party's dismal history of failure.

Vote for Disraeli?

When it was time for Ed Miliband to stand at the rostrum he knew – because almost the entire British media had blanketed him with the advice – that this was his make or break time. He slaved at learning his lines off by heart so that as he boarded the train to Birmingham he was as word perfect as any Old Vic veteran. Although an eavesdropping fellow passenger heard him spurring in frustration 'What am I doing? Who knows what I'm doing? Where's my fucking diary?' he came through to make a speech arousing the massive satisfaction of party members and the media – which can be explained only by reference to their impoverished standards of expectation. Plunging into typical politicians' gobbledygook, Miliband referred (no less than 44 times) to the concept of One-Nation, with an implied salute to Benjamin Disraeli whose name is forever linked to the phrase – which was also used by Tony Blair in Labour's election winning 1997 manifesto: 'I want a Britain that is one nation, with shared values and purpose...' At a time of recession, with the promise of even fiercer pressure on our living standards, the best Miliband and his party can do is urge us to have regard to the words of a Victorian politician (whose concern for the effects of the class divide and its resultant problems did not endure into what might be called history) and of a recent leader with the reputation of a blatant liar. Meanwhile in the real world, the *British Medical Journal*, supported by the Samaritans, reports that as unemployment increases so does the rate of suicide.

Vacant Posturing

The Tories went to their conference this year desperate to hear that George Osborne and his magicians at the Treasury will soon have dissolved the recession into history. In a characteristically empty speech David Cameron was able to feed their appetite. For the LibDems Nick Clegg could do little more than console them for the angry likelihood of approaching doom and his own banishment to bitter memory. Ed Miliband showed that he has finally grasped the need for any aspirant political leader to compose a speech consisting of headlines and vacant posturing. None of them could suggest that for human society there should be something other, better or more hopeful. The case for us doing it for ourselves, for changing the way we order the world so that it is to the betterment of humans, remained intact and unchallenged.

IVAN

The Monarchy: feudal relic, democratic deficit

WE LIVE in a free and democratic society, with a fearless free media who hold the possessors of power to account, bringing the spotlight of truth to bear upon their activities. Yet, what's this? The BBC apologising and cowering like a whipped dog because one of its journalists revealed that the reigning Monarch had queried with Ministers why Abu Hamza had not been deported. That is, a BBC reporter reporting on the functions of government and the institutions of state. Precisely what a reporter should be doing in an open and democratic society. Except, what the reporter had revealed was precisely the absence of democracy at the heart of government.

This comes alongside the twin running battles the *Guardian* is having with the government through the information commissioner. They want the government to reveal the rules by which Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles are given the right to veto parts of acts of parliament that concern their interests. They also want the government to reveal details of letters sent by Prince Charles, lobbying government ministers and trying to influence policy. The government, apparently with palace backing, are fighting tooth and claw to stop these documents being revealed.

What is at stake is effectively monarchical interference in both executive and legislative functions of state: promoting policies to ministers and then editing bills going before parliament. These are permanent, unremovable, unelected people having key and decisive influence over the laws that we have to live under. Importantly, their veto extends to commercial matters, involving the vast holdings of the Crown and the Duchy of Cornwall. That is, they have the personal right to write the laws that give them an advantage over commercial rivals.

As the *Guardian* notes: 'In the past two parliamentary sessions Charles has been asked to consent to at least 12 draft bills on everything from wreck removals to co-operative societies. Between 2007 and 2009 he was consulted on bills relating to coroners, economic

development and construction, marine and coastal access, housing and regeneration, energy and planning. In Charles's case, the little-known power stems from his role as the head of the £700m Duchy of Cornwall estate, which provides his £17m-a-year private income.' (<http://tinyurl.com/8frkdcq>)

Such legislative power also extends to changing employment law with regards to the Royal households. So it is not just the principle of Royal interference in the law, it is also the practice that can have dramatic real-world effects for those finding themselves employed by the sovereign.

As the judges ruling in the case of the release of Prince Charles' letters, such matters are covered by constitutional convention. That is, there is no law covering them (and so they are not directly subject to judicial oversight). In the case of

Charles' 'Black Spider Memos' (so-called because of his handwriting), the government was claiming they were subject to immunity from freedom of information laws because they were part of his training to be a future Monarch, and so he must be able to correspond with ministers and learn how government works (and presumably, have access to privileged information unavailable to mere voters).

This is an extension of the constitutional convention of confidentiality surrounding the relationship of the Monarch to their ministers. As the judges explained, by convention the Monarch is entitled 'to be consulted, to encourage and to warn.' (<http://tinyurl.com/97bnya8>) (This is accompanied by its twin convention that the Monarch must act on the advice of their ministers). So, in the weekly meetings between Queen Elizabeth and her Prime Minister, we can infer that she is not merely apprised of current events, but consulted and asked for her opinion (and given an opportunity to freely give her encouragement and warnings).

The principle of confidentiality surrounding these conventions is that the Monarchy is supposed to defer to parliamentary sovereignty, and be politically neutral. If, though, Elizabeth is giving opinions and



“Should the professional politicians ever need a large-scale distraction to mobilise support, there is no doubt they would happily throw the Windsors under a bus”

warnings (and vetoes) then, practically, she is not being neutral. The cloak of silence merely covers up her political positions and actions. She is merely seen to be neutral. Convention protects her from controversy.

So, when Frank Gardner revealed on the Today Programme that Elizabeth Windsor had been asking her Home Secretary why Abu

Royal Family continue to retain considerable public sympathy, and it would be a hard battle for any government to publicly fall out with the Crown. A wise politician avoids unnecessary battles, and so both sides negotiate around the existence of the nuclear option (and possible mutual destruction). Through such means the Monarch, being able to excise clauses of bills affecting them,

like a constitutional shark lurking beneath the waters. No Monarch could use it without bringing the whole constitutional house of cards down, but what Prime Minister would want to be in the position of facing that crisis?

Real politicians like to promote and thus bask in (and share) the popularity of the Royal Family as well as some of their unaccountable prerogative powers. The continued existence, influence and organised light-fingeredness of Elizabeth and Charles Windsor is their small price to pay. The rich pageant of the dignified parts of state provide depth and meaning to their tiny roles in a pitiless bureaucracy hemmed in by the real power of property.

The good news is for conspiracy theorists: there really is a vast, organised conspiracy at the heart of the state. The sad reality, though, is its name is government. Secrecy is the essence of warfare, and the government is an ongoing armed campaign against the vast majority of people. Should the professional politicians ever need a large-scale distraction to mobilise support, there is no doubt they would happily throw the Windsors under a bus.

****Stop Press****

On 16th October Dominic Grieve, the Attorney General used his veto under the Freedom of Information Act to block publication of Charles Windsor's letters. He said: 'Much of the correspondence does indeed reflect the Prince of Wales's most deeply held personal views and beliefs. The letters in this case are in many cases particularly frank. They also contain remarks about public affairs which would in my view, if revealed, have had a material effect upon the willingness of the government to engage in correspondence with the Prince of Wales, and would potentially have undermined his position of political neutrality.' The *Guardian* is understood to be considering taking the case to the High Court. His decision speaks volumes.

PIK SMEET

Large-scale distraction? The Jubilee



Hamza could not be arrested, he was revealing a dark secret at the heart of government, the secret of the reality of royal interference. The BBC apology was instant, abject and craven. It was so important to swiftly redraw the curtains because the cornerstone of this arrangement is what in international affairs is called 'soft-power'.

One constitutional scholar defines conventions as existing: 'if (i) there are precedents underpinning it, (ii) the parties to the relevant practice consider themselves to be bound by it and (iii) there is a reason for the existence of the convention' (<http://tinyurl.com/97bnya8>). Whilst either side of the convention may breach it, an act which is technically unconstitutional, there is no way to enforce such rules through the courts. Note that this applies to both sides. The Monarch retains the implicit capacity to cause governmental mayhem by beginning to more vigorously exert or stretch their veto capacity. Further, the

exercises a power US presidents can only dream of: the line item veto. It effectively makes Elizabeth a legislator.

In his play, *The Apple Cart*, Bernard Shaw explored this residual Royal power (the play's title suggests the precarious balance of power between Crown and executive). Although his King Magnus, has been seen as in line with Shaw's attraction to the idea of the strong leader, the play does explore this mutual relationship between the power of the elected state and the aesthetic appeal of Monarchy (what some constitutional scholars call the 'dignified part' of the state). He notes that for the professional politicians, the Monarchy provides an alibi and a distraction, belying their inability to compete with the real, effective power of capital. The centre of that play is the long dormant general right of Monarchs to withhold Royal Assent to Acts of Parliament. This power has not actually been used since Queen Anne, but it remains



Eric Hobsbawm: historian and Leninist

The death of Eric Hobsbawm on 1 October marked the end of a generation of left-wing historians who, while advancing historical materialism, rejected Marxian politics by embracing Leninism.

Prominent amongst this group were E.P. Thompson, Christopher Hill and Rodney Hilton, but the list also includes Maurice Dobb, A.L. Morton, Dorothy Thompson, John Saville, Victor Kiernan, Raphael Samuel and George Rudé. They entered the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and were active in the Communist Party Historians Group. Despite their political shortcomings, in the decades following the Second World War their work was part of a challenge to the arid, high-political history of ‘great men’ that had previously dominated the academic study of history. Some went on to be active in the founding of the Society for the Study of Labour History and were part of the rise of social history ‘from below’ as an established academic subject. They produced works of historical scholarship which sometimes received a warm welcome from Socialists eager to absorb scholarship with a historical materialist perspective. Some of the work of this group of historians will continue to be a rich resource for socialists. If only they could have applied their historical materialism as rigorously to their own times as to their

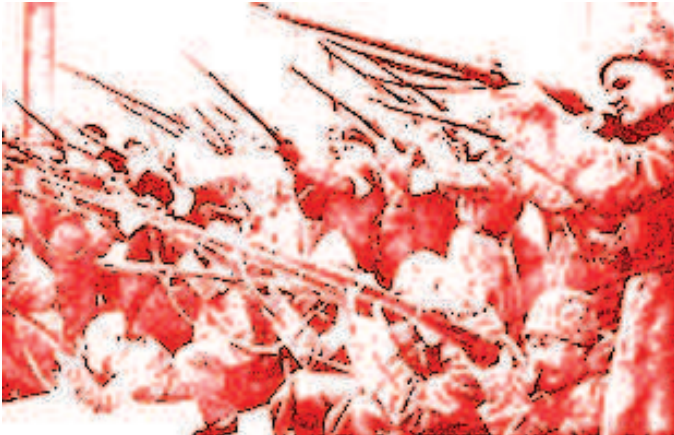
“We knew a new world was being born amid blood and tears and horror: revolution, civil war, famine ... we had the illusion that this brutal, experimental, system was going to work better than the West.”

respective periods of study, perhaps they would not have politically affiliated to Leninism.

Hobsbawm, like many of the Communist Party historians who later rose to prominence, was radicalised during the inter-war years, pinning his hopes for the future on the Soviet Union. Nonetheless most of them left the Communist Party after the Russian repression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, already disillusioned by the dawning realisation of the horrors of Stalin’s Russia and ongoing state repression. Hobsbawm was unusual in that he did not leave the Communist Party but remained a member until its collapse and to some extent continued as an apologist for Bolshevism until his death.

Hobsbawm was no unrepentant Stalinist, being an advocate of Eurocommunism in the 1970s and a supporter of Neil Kinnock’s reform of the Labour Party in the 1980s, but he retained a sense of the Soviet

“Because the Socialist Party was anti-Bolshevik it has been ignored or dismissed by historians of communism and the labour movement.”



Union having been a worthy experiment gone awry. In his memoirs he wrote that the 'dream of the October Revolution is still there somewhere inside me . . . I have abandoned, nay, rejected it, but it has not been obliterated. To this day, I notice myself treating the memory and tradition of the USSR with an indulgence and tenderness.' (*Interesting Times*, p.56) In an article in the *Guardian* (14 September 2002) Hobsbawm said, 'In the early days we knew a new world was being born amid blood and tears and horror: revolution, civil war, famine ... Thanks to the breakdown of the west, we had the illusion that even this brutal, experimental, system was going to work better than the West. It was that or nothing.'

But it wasn't that or nothing. As a member of the CPGB Hobsbawm supported the Soviet Union because it represented the hopes of those who mistakenly believed that a brutal form state capitalism could transform itself into a genuinely socialist society. As such he was an opponent of the Socialist Party, which then as now, seeks to establish socialism on the basis of real common ownership and democratic control of the means of living without a 'transition period' involving state capitalism. In one of his articles, originally published in *New Left Review*, Hobsbawm wrote on the subject of H. M. Hyndman and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and referred to the Socialist Party of Great Britain as a 'wholly irrelevant conventicle'. For a historian known for his grasp of detail, however, he wrongly stated the date of the formation

of the party as 1906 instead of 1904. Doubtless this is because, like most historians who dismiss the Socialist Party out of hand, he had never taken the time to seriously examine its historical background or record.

The article went on to call for a reassessment of the SDF which had previously been scoffed at by left-wing historians. The SDF, argued Hobsbawm, had demonstrated longevity, had a proletarian character and had many left-wing workers that passed through it. It was characterised not by sectarianism but by an understandable intransigence (although, as a good Bolshevik, Hobsbawm remarks that the SDF was 'quite unable to envisage ... the problems of revolt or the taking of power.'). Hobsbawm's qualified acknowledgments of the achievements of the SDF are all equally applicable to the historical place of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in British working-class political life. But one thing rules it out of contention for inclusion in the historical record of socialism in Britain for left-wing historians – it did not feed into the formation of the CPGB in 1920 but opposed it. For Hobsbawm, the SDF had historical credentials as part of a political exercise of looking for British native antecedents of the CPGB. The Socialist Party has stood for socialism as understood by Marx – non-market and non-state – and was therefore anti-Bolshevik. Because of this, the Socialist Party has been ignored or summarily dismissed by historians of communism and the labour movement who have generally been Leninist, Trotskyist or Labourite.

Disappointment with the realities of the Soviet Union led many of Hobsbawm's contemporaries in the CPGB to ultimate political disillusionment and subsequent trajectories into other variants of left-wing politics. Whilst that generation of historians has itself become history, the Socialist Party still carries on the political task ignored by them – that of trying to begin to make the Socialist revolution that the Bolshevik revolution in Russia could never have achieved. That task necessarily involves an understanding and rejection of the strategy of the insurrectionary seizure of the state and the establishment of state capitalism as a route to Socialism. Today Socialists still have much work to do to recover the words socialism and communism from their association with state capitalism and the brutality of the political strategy supported by Hobsbawm.

CSK



A Soviet-era souvenir in Prague, 2008

Half Marx: Flanders flounders

Whenever capitalism gets into an economic crisis there is a revival of interest in Marx, and not just amongst critics of capitalism. So it was to be expected that Marx's ideas should be examined in BBC Economics Editor, Stephanie Flanders' recent three-part programme for BBC2 and the Open University: 'Masters of Money'.

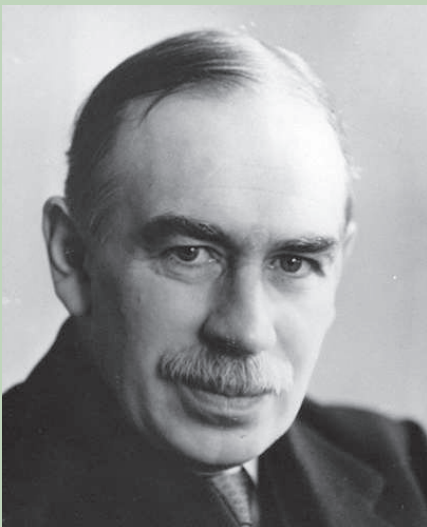


Stephanie Flanders

She examined first the ideas of Keynes (who advocated government intervention to save capitalism), then the obscure and slightly batty Austrian School economist Friedrich August von Hayek (who wanted to free capitalism from all government interference, which not even his great admirer Thatcher dared to try). Marx's turn came last, on 1 October.

Flanders got two things

Keynes: advocated government intervention to save capitalism



right. First, that Marx analysed capitalism as an economy that pitted two classes – profit-seeking capitalists and wage-dependent workers – against each other. Second, that Marx saw capitalism as an inherently unstable system under which economic crises and downturns were bound to occur from time to time.

But she got it wrong on two other, crucial points. First, her claim, repeated several times, that Marx had offered no alternative to capitalism. Second, she made Marx have an 'underconsumptionist' (workers can't buy back) theory of capitalist crises.

Marx's alternative

It is true that Marx did not believe in drawing up recipes for the cookshops of the future, but he did describe the basis of the society he thought was going to replace capitalism: 'an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common' (chapter 1 of *Capital*); 'a co-operative society based on the common ownership of the means of production' (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*); 'abolition of

private property', 'the Communistic abolition of buying and selling', 'the conversion of the functions of the State into a mere superintendence of production' (*Communist Manifesto*); 'abolition of the wages system' (*Value, Price and Profit*). In short, a classless, stateless, moneyless, wageless society based on the common ownership of the means of production.

It was probably inevitable that what happened in Russia and Eastern Europe would be seen as a failed attempt to replace capitalism, with disastrous results. So Flanders went to visit a former Stasi prison in East Berlin but, to be fair, she didn't overdo this and at one point hinted that Marx might not have approved. Indeed he wouldn't. He would surely have recognised this as a form of capitalism, based on the exploitation of wage-labour by a minority which controlled the state – state capitalism.

What Marx did not say

According to Flanders, Marx's

“Capitalism is a system geared to capital accumulation which falters, as now, when the prospects for profit fall, resulting in capitalists choosing not to spend their share of national income”



Friedrich August von Hayek: wanted to free capitalism from all government interference

theory of crises was that they are caused when the total income of the workers falls too low so that they are unable to buy all the products that the capitalists want to sell to them. So capitalism is in a bind: capitalists seek to maximise profits and this can only be done at the expense of wages. But, if wages are reduced, so is the market for goods. On the other hand, if wages go up, the market does expand, but profits go down, reducing the capitalist's incentive to invest in production.

The trouble is that this simplistic theory has been put forward by people who regard themselves as Marxists. They argue that the crisis of the 1970s was caused by workers pushing up wages and so squeezing profits and that this provoked a fightback by Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s on behalf of the capitalists. This, in turn resulted in the workers' share in national income falling. For a while workers' consumption was kept going by their going into debt, but when their credit ran out, the crisis caused by a fall in total workers' income broke out. This is the view put forward, for instance, in Richard Wolff's widely viewed

video *When Capitalism Hits the Fan*.

Flanders accepted this as Marx's view. But it wasn't. This theory is based on the fallacy that capitalism is a system geared to meeting consumption and that the market is made up of paying demand for consumer goods only. In fact, the market is also made up of paying demand for producer goods (machinery, raw materials, intermediate goods and energy) so what the workers can't buy the capitalists can. It is this business reinvestment of profits in expanding production that is the driving force of the capitalist economy, and it is variations in this – not in workers' consumption – that causes capitalism's instability.

Capitalism is a system geared to capital accumulation which falters, as now, when the prospects for profit fall, resulting in capitalists

choosing not to spend their share of national income. This inevitably happens sooner or later in a boom when capitalists in one key sector of the economy in their pursuit of

Marx did not believe in drawing up recipes for the cookshops of the future



profits overproduce in relation to the demand for their products and this has a knock-on effect on the rest of the economy, leading to a more general economic downturn.

The end of capitalism

Flanders also talked of Marx arguing that economic crises would get worse and worse and would eventually lead to, as she put it, 'the total collapse of capitalism'. It is true that in the *Communist Manifesto*, a political manifesto rather than a work of economics and written before Marx undertook his detailed study of capitalism, he did refer to 'more extensive and more destructive crises' but never expressed the view nor expected that capitalism would collapse of its own accord through its inherent economic contradictions. He saw capitalism coming to an end, but through the political action of those he called its 'gravediggers', the exploited working class. In other words, capitalism had to be done to death. It still needs to be.

ADAM BUICK



'Gravediggers': the exploited working class prepares capitalism's final resting place

Fyah inna Babylon - a Marxist in the Media

I WOKE up one morning with a three-hour weekly radio show. The show was to be in the evening 'specialist' slot on Fridays and was called 'Roots, Rock, Reggae'. I've always loved Jamaican music and for a Socialist 'Roots Reggae' is a perfect genre with its 100 percent political lyrics. Made in the ghettos of Kingston, these are songs of liberation: as I used to say, 'the conscious thunder of righteous rhythms'. On the death of Bob Marley there was a slow drift back to 'gangster ragga', as Jamaican music lost its way in the eighties.

After joining a reggae collective in 2000 I was relieved to find that not only 'old school' roots was back in favour, but a whole new generation of conscious musicians were rocking to the sound of liberation once again. I had not really expected to get the job as I had explicitly stated that my show would have to have a high political content. I was not interested in the usual 'pick and mix' entertainment genre.

Don't get me wrong – I had a lot of respect for some of the other DJ's with their in-depth knowledge of specific music genres. I just wanted to discuss the ideas that the lyrics and rhythms of roots reggae provoke – liberation, righteousness, Zion and the Babylon System, etc. Truth be told, it was a great opportunity to air some socialist ideas on live radio (a rare thing these days).

Everything started pretty well and I even got away with not playing 'The News' in the middle of my show on the grounds that Murdochian propaganda would not go down well with my 'audience'. My idea was to pick a theme or two from the lyrics and discuss the political implications. There's something called 'dub reggae' (an enhanced instrumental track) that would keep the rhythm going as I pontificated. One such deliberation concerned the vexed subject of the reactionary and progressive elements within Rastafarianism. I have been called a hypocrite by some Rastas because I play the Roots but reject the spiritual part of its message. I attempted to point out that, as in most religions, because of its absence on earth, the need for justice is projected into another supernatural or spiritual realm. The yearning for righteousness is a very human ideal born of the suffering endemic within the exploitation of Capitalism (the Babylon System) and is shared by Socialists. Once you relegate political action to the mystical caprice of a deity (Jah) you inevitably produce an authoritarian social structure, with God and his prophets on top and the rest of us somewhere below – always anti-democratic and reactionary. Such was the polemical nature of my broadcasts. When I started, the 'boss' had taken me to one side and said: 'make the show you would want to listen to' – and this is precisely what I did.

Before finding myself on the other side of the microphone I had nursed a contempt for local radio. The blandness, let's be honest, is mind numbing. The mindless repetition of 'petit bourgeois' propaganda masquerading as community radio is politically laughable. And yet, as I learned, the people involved are normal human beings, totally oblivious to their role in perpetuating the values of the capitalist obscenity.

They are obsessed with something they call 'professionalism'. Any minor technical mistake or, much to my amusement, the use of inappropriate language is anathema. Turf wars with other radio stations is another obsession that feeds the fragile egos of those who are terrified by the endless 'rules and regulations' of broadcasting. It is this atmosphere that produces the blandness which so disfigures local radio and renders it politically impotent – and is, of course, the very intention of this kind of broadcasting censorship. To many broadcasters and consumers alike, music has become just another commodity with beautiful people singing beautiful songs with beautiful voices 24/7. Perfect nonsense fills the airwaves to feed the sick romance of

lifestyle consumerism.

And yet a show like mine found its way through the cracks for a while. What it so obviously lacked in 'professionalism' it made up for in 'novelty'. I tried, as the rastas say, to 'keep it real' and forbade any political cynicism for three hours a week. So, I hear you ask, what could possibly go wrong and why is this great gift to radio no longer broadcasting?

The cost of running even a modest local radio station, even staffed with volunteers like me is prohibitive, and without advertising revenue it became impossible for the individuals involved to continue financing it themselves. Licences for FM, DAB and online broadcasting are astronomical and serve the dual purpose of financing the treasury and keeping those without money off the airwaves. Just for a while there, I was able to indulge two of my great passions in life, reggae music and socialism. The Devil doesn't have all the best tunes and I'm sure conscious reggae roots will once again provoke revolutionary vibes on local radio somewhere. I'm just relieved my comrades didn't hear me utter the phrase 'Jah Rastafari' at the conclusion of one of my more emotionally intense broadcasts – love is a funny thing.

WEZ



Haile Selassie. Rastafarians believe he is God and that he will return to Africa

“Once you relegate political action to the mystical caprice of a deity (Jah) you inevitably produce an authoritarian social structure, with God and his prophets on top and the rest of us somewhere below – always anti-democratic and reactionary”

Why we need SOCIALISM



Socialists want to replace the present capitalist system with a new system based on common ownership instead of ownership by the few and with production directly to meet people's needs instead of production for sale on a market with a view to profits. In such a socialist (or communist) society – the two words mean the same – money would be redundant. It's not so much that we want to 'abolish money' as wanting a change to a society with a system of production and distribution in which money would be redundant and so would disappear.

Capitalism is the system which now dominates the world. No country escapes or can escape from its influence and effects. It is essentially an economic system where the means for producing useful goods and services take the form of 'capital', or wealth used to produce more wealth with a view to profit, and where the goods and services produced take the form of 'exchange value', they all have a price and have to be exchanged for money.

The farms, factories, offices and other places where wealth is produced are owned and controlled by rich individuals, capitalist corporations and states. Under the pressure of competition, those in charge of these 'units of capital' are driven to seek as much profit as they can, not so much for the personal benefit of the owners (though this does come into it) as to get funds to reinvest in cost-cutting innovations so as to be able to compete with, and outcompete, their rivals. One consequence of this is that more and more capital is accumulated. This in fact is what capitalism is all about: the accumulation of more and more capital out of profits.

So, over time the means of production and their productive power have built up and society has now become able, in theory, to produce enough useful goods and services to meet people's needs. But the economic mechanism of capitalism does not let this happen. Making profits and re-investing them as more capital always comes first.

It's an irrational system of 'production for production's sake', of 'growth for growth's sake'. There are other anti-social results of capitalism. Such as the recurring economic crises and slumps like the one we're in now. Such as the wars

and preparation for war that occur as capitalist states compete over sources of raw material, trade routes, markets and investment outlets. Such as putting short-term cost and profit considerations before protecting the environment and respecting a balance of nature. Above all it does not allow production to be geared to meeting the needs of people for food, clothes, housing, healthcare, education and the other amenities for an enjoyable life.

People's needs are met but only to an extent – to the extent that they have money to pay for them. There are various ways an individual can get money. They can inherit it (be born with it). They can steal it. They can beg for it. Or they can work for it – which is what most people do.

What sort of society is it where most people have to fend for themselves to get money so they can access what they need to live – and where, even in a developed country like Britain, 10-15 percent can't keep up and are forced to rely on more or less meagre handouts from the state? This, when, from the point of view of technology, society could produce enough for all, especially if we get rid of capitalism's artificial scarcity (the need to make a profit holds back producing enough to meet people's needs) and its organised scarcity (not just of wars and preparation for war, but also all of the resources devoted to the counting and transfer of money).

Socialists say capitalism must go if we're going to be able to provide a decent living for every man, woman and child on the planet.

What is needed in place of capitalism is for the Earth's resources to become the common heritage of all. Then, they could be geared to satisfying people's needs. If productive resources were commonly owned, then so would what they produced. The issue to be dealt with would be, not how to sell to people what had been produced (how could you when they're already the joint owners of it?) It's how to share-out/distribute what's been produced. In other words, exchange (buying and selling) is replaced by distribution (sharing-out and taking). For this, money is not needed.

“society could produce enough for all, especially if we get rid of capitalism's artificial scarcity”

The Pre-Raphaelites

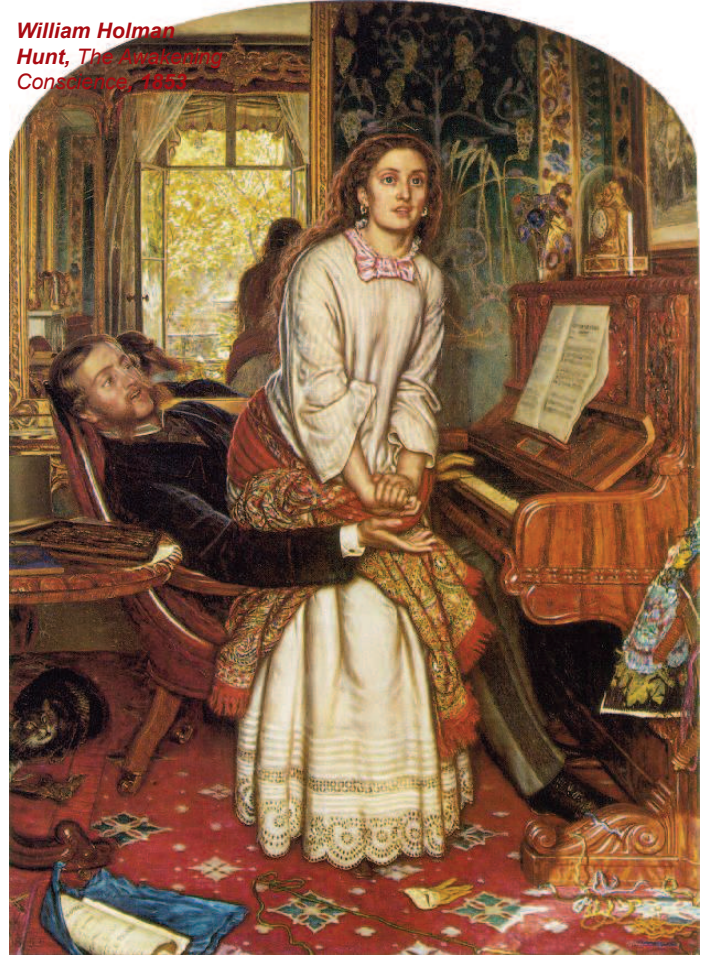
The *Pre-Raphaelites* exhibition at Tate Britain is subtitled *Victorian Avant-Garde*, although the Pre-Raphaelites did not reflect contemporary bourgeois capitalist society in Britain but hearkened back to the early Italian Renaissance of the 1400s.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in 1848, the year of Revolutions and of the publication of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*. British industrial capitalism was booming, free trade was triumphant, the Great Exhibition showcased Britain's superiority as the 'workshop of the world' but the antagonisms between the capitalist class and working class were becoming visible. Dickens and Mrs Gaskell, and Engels in the *Condition of the Working Class in England*, described the poverty of the working class, but the Pre-Raphaelites rejected the machine age of modern industrial capitalism, believing beauty and spirituality had been lost, and wanted to provide an alternative to the materialism of the age.

The Pre-Raphaelites brought a realism to biblical subjects such as Millais' portrayal of the 'holy family' as working class in *Christ in the House of His Parents* which shocked bourgeois sensibilities. Holman Hunt evoked bourgeois sexual guilt when a woman sees the error of her ways in the *Awakening Conscience*.

Ford Madox Brown portrayed a young couple sailing from the White Cliffs of Dover in the *Last of England*, which highlighted the fact 300,000 people emigrated in 1852, and in *Work* he showed labour as a noble and sacred duty in capitalism. In contrast, the *Stone Breaker* by Wallis depicts the exhausting toil of an agrarian worker. Holman Hunt painted a portrait of industrial capitalist and patron of the Pre-Raphaelites, *Thomas Fairbairn*, who had tried to smash an early trade union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, in 1852.

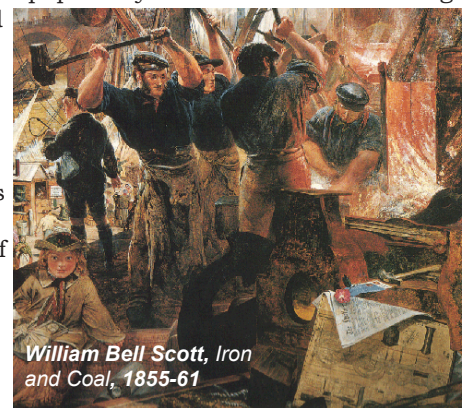
This exhibition also includes the decorative arts of William Morris, Philip Webb and Burne-Jones which



covers furniture, stained glass, textiles, carpets and tapestries depicting Chaucerian themes. Morris's 'medievalism' revived older forms of production in protest at the cheap, mass produced goods of capitalist society, and a desire to have 'attractive work' in producing objects. Later Morris, with Eleanor Marx and others, founded the Socialist League, a forerunner of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

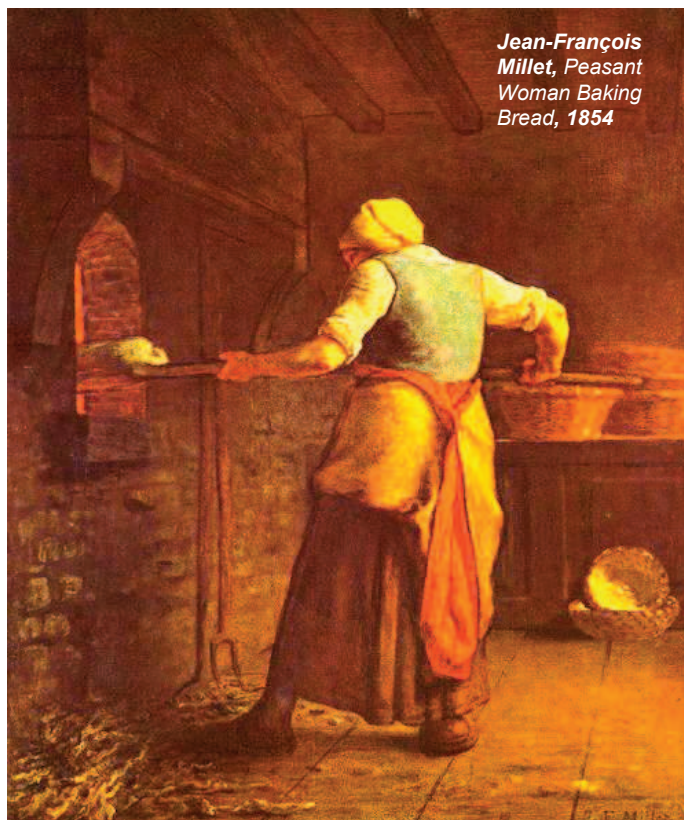
The Pre-Raphaelites are in stark contrast to the 'realism' in French painting in the same period where Millet depicted *Woman Baking Bread*, and Courbet portrayed the *Stone Breakers* (a work admired by Proudhon), and the *Origin of the World* which depicted a woman's genitalia (John Ruskin would have fainted). Interestingly a friend of Rossetti called Bell Scott painted an industrial scene in *Iron and Coal*. However this is overshadowed by the mammoth productive forces of industrial capitalism in Menzel's the *Iron Rolling Mill* (*Modern Cyclops*), a picture which adorns the cover of the Penguin edition of Marx's *Capital Volume 1*.

Marx identified the popularity of Greek art as stemming from 'the childhood of human society where it had obtained its most beautiful development'. Did the Pre-Raphaelites yearn for the adolescent phase of human history?



What Joe Orton saw

Joe Orton's 1969 play, *What the Butler Saw*, was recently performed at the Vaudeville Theatre in London and starred Omad Djalli and Tim McInnerny. This farce by 'the Oscar Wilde of Welfare State gentility' attacks petty bourgeois



Jean-François
Millet, *Peasant
Woman Baking
Bread*, 1854



morality, sexual prudery, marriage, hypocrisy, conservative values, authority ('Accept your condition without tears and without abusing those placed in authority'), religion ('reject all paranormal phenomena. It's the only way to remain sane'), psychiatry, and the police. Orton, influenced by Artaud, celebrates anarchy, the Dionysian pleasures of poly-sexual gratification and nymphomania, and delights in sadism, transvestism, 'madness', incest, gender identity confusion, and the base human appetites of lust for money and power.

What the Butler Saw has echoes of Sophocles' tale of Oedipus and his mother/wife Jocasta, the 'madness' of Caligula, and the *Carry On* films. Orton wrote critically of the film, *The Marat/Sade*: 'Let's look at mad people. At queer people.' Interestingly, in his play there are no 'lunatics' just doctors, and he parodies the traditional Freudian psychologist. Freud was

the bourgeois psychiatrist and defender of capitalism who went from an emphasis on Eros to Thanatos. It is only with Reich do we get psychoanalysis with Marxism and the development of psycho-sexual health for the working class. The 1960s saw a radical shift in psychiatry with the use of LSD therapy and the RD Laing 'anti-psychiatry' school. Fromm in *The Sane Society* identified the contradictions in capitalism between 'having' and 'being', and the need for a sane socialist society. Orton writes: 'You can't be a rationalist in an irrational world. It isn't rational'.

Orton had no time for the 'work ethic' ('I resented having to go to work in the morning'), adopted a Nietzschean outlook ('reject all the values of society'), and disliked bourgeois capitalist society, writing with echoes of Reich that 'sex is the only way to smash the wretched civilization, the only way to infuriate them, much more fucking and they'll be screaming hysterics in next to no time'. He pungently added: 'the old whore society really lifted up her skirts and the stench was pretty foul'. Orton also perceived the contradictions of bourgeois liberalism noting: 'I don't like the sort of liberal that is reactionary underneath'.

Orton satirises Britain's 'popular' wartime leader Churchill who died in 1965. In 1967, Hochhuth's play *Soldiers* implicated Churchill in the 1943 Sikorski crash. This member of the capitalist class is also responsible for miners killed in Tonyandy, anarchists burned to death in Sidney Street, 150,000 war deaths in Gallipoli, millions of deaths in the Bengal Famine of 1943, half a million deaths in Allied bombing of German cities, threats to machine gun strikers in the 1926 General Strike and the gassing of Kurdish rebels in Iraq in 1920.

In the 1960s the Lord Chamberlain would not allow Churchill's phallus at the end of the play, so it was replaced with his cigar.

STEVE CLAYTON



Value and surplus value

PEOPLE WRITE the strangest things. Here, for instance, is John Lanchester in an essay 'Marx at 193' in the *London Review of Books* (5 April):

'In Marx's judgement surplus value is the entire basis of capitalism: all value in capitalism is the surplus value created by labour. That's what makes up the cost of the thing.'

While Marx did say that the extraction of surplus value is the basis of capitalism and that all value is created by labour, he did not say that all value is 'surplus value'. Only some value is.

In the process of capitalist production, according to Marx, the workers, through the exercise of their mental and physical energies (their 'labour-power'), transfer to the product the previously existing value embodied in the raw materials, energy, wear and tear of machines and the like. At the same time they create new value. A part of this, corresponding to the value of their labour-power, returns to them as wages; the rest, over and above this, is appropriated by their employer as 'surplus value'.

That Lanchester's statement, 'all value in capitalism is the surplus value created by labour' is not just bad wording becomes clear when he goes on to write of Marx's 'surplus theory of value' rather than of his 'theory of surplus value'. This leads him to bandy about the term 'surplus value' in bizarre ways. According to him, you can create surplus value for yourself, and, as a customer or client of a company, you create surplus value for that company when it makes you book online or deal with a phone menu. This has nothing to do with Marx's use of the term.

While Marx thought that all value was created by

labour, he did not think that all work created value. Products only acquire value when they are produced for sale on a market (as 'commodities'). This was expressed, when they were bought and sold, as their 'exchange value' (in money terms, price). In fact, for Marx, it was only through exchange value that a commodity's value can be expressed.

Products not produced for sale do not have a value even though they are products of work. They are simply products, useful things that people have made to use. Before capitalism, most products were produced to be used directly and not for sale. Even today under capitalism, there is work that does not produce value. Housework doesn't, nor does DIY or gardening. To say that such work does not produce value is not to say that it is worthless. On the contrary, most of it is very worthwhile. It is just that it does not produce 'value'. Work in socialism won't either as it won't be producing things for sale.

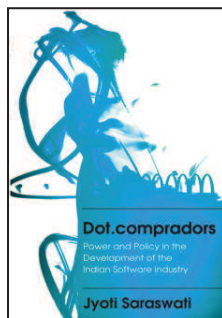
Even when there is production for sale not all work produces value. According to Marx, only labour that is 'socially necessary' does that, by which he meant the time which it takes a worker of average skill to produce a particular product. Otherwise, the slower workers worked the more value they would create.

For Marx, the value of a commodity was determined by the amount of socially-necessary labour embodied in it from start to finish, i.e., not just the labour at the final stage, but also all the labour at previous stages right back to extracting the raw materials from nature.

Marx did not think that under capitalism commodities actually exchanged at their value. He explained in Volume III of *Capital* that, due to the averaging of the rate of profit, goods sold at what he called their 'price of production' (cost + the average rate of profit). So Marx's theory of value is not a theory of price, but rather an explanatory tool to understand the working of the capitalist system as a whole.

Dot Capitalism

Jyoti Saraswati, *Dot. compradors: Power and Policy in the Development of the Indian Software Industry*. Pluto, £17.99.



India is a major centre for software services, the provision of software for specific users (as opposed to general packages such as Microsoft Office); an example would be the system for the

London Underground. This book is a useful and informative survey of the Indian software industry's structure and history.

Four multinational companies dominate Information Technology consultancy, one of them being IBM. In addition to these global 'Giants', there are three Indian 'Majors'. As an illustration of India's role, about one in three of the employees of the Giants works in India. Partly, of course, it is cheaper to employ highly skilled English-speaking staff in India than in, say, in the US. The Giants also have a habit of poaching staff from the Majors, who spend time and money training them only to find their best workers upping sticks after a few years.

As for why such a profitable and technologically advanced industry should flourish in a developing country such as India, Saraswati rejects simple analyses in terms of just market forces or state intervention. Rather, more complex interactions need to be examined. As long ago as 1962, defeat in the Sino-Indian war revealed the importance of IT, and by 1970 the government had taken steps to set up a computer industry protected from international competition. The Indian hardware industry was unable to survive, but the software industry did pretty well, providing software for computers that did not come with ready-bundled general packages. In the 1980s the US became an enormous market for software services, which, unlike many parts of a business, can be provided by remote delivery. To aid this, the Indian government provided telecommunications infrastructure, augmented with satellite links.

The Indian software industry set up its own business club, the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) in 1987. But since the local subsidiaries of the

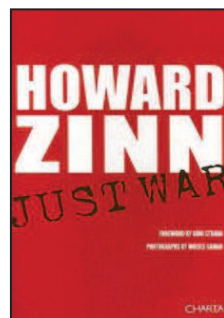
global Giants were allowed to join, this eventually came to be controlled by the multinational companies. The Giants are now generally doing better than the Indian Majors, which have themselves begun to establish delivery centres abroad (in China and Mexico, for example), which they hope will be free of the poaching mentioned earlier. It is worth noting that the Chinese government has tried and failed to establish a major software service industry there, so state intervention is not enough by itself.

In case you are wondering about the title, a comprador is, in Saraswati's definition, 'An individual of, and in, a developing country who serves Western interests'. The top people in NASSCOM are compradors, he argues. They serve the interests of Western capitalism by, among other things, supporting improved access by the US to Indian markets in return for more visas being issued to Indian IT professionals for short-term work in the US. But clearly the embedding of the Indian software industry in global capitalism goes far beyond that.

PB

War as Terrorism

Howard Zinn, *Just War*. Charta, £10.00.



Howard Zinn, who died in 2010, was a radical American activist and writer, author of *A People's History of the United States*. This volume contains the text of a talk he gave

in Rome in 2005, together with some striking photos by Moises Saman. Its strength lies in a combination of personal remarks and more general reflections.

Appalled by what he knew of fascism, Zinn volunteered for the US Army Air Force in 1943, and flew in bombing missions over continental Europe. But once the war was over he gradually came to question what he had been doing. Accounts of Hiroshima showed what the effects of the atomic bomb had been, and Zinn realised that when he helped to drop napalm on the French town of Royan, he was participating in the killing of children. The Second World War might seem to be the extreme case

of a humanitarian war, but however just a war against fascism appeared to be, he and others 'had become unthinking killers of innocent people'.

The defeat of Hitler and Mussolini did not lead to the end of militarism, as there were now two superpowers with thousands of nuclear weapons. And war, Zinn argues, is but 'the extreme form of terrorism'. The US attacks in recent years on Iraq and Afghanistan are motivated by a desire to control resources such as oil. So soldiers do not 'give their lives for their country': their lives are taken from them, not given, and this is in the service of the government and the rest of the ruling class. Governments use a combination of coercion and propaganda to get workers to fight for them.

Zinn quotes Albert Einstein: 'Wars will stop when men refuse to fight'. More accurately, wars will stop when people no longer support the social system that gives rise to them and replace it with one where wars are a thing of the past. In this book at least, Zinn has little to say about how this might happen, though he does refer to a world 'in which national borders are erased and we are truly one human family'.

So, a slim volume but an instructive one.

PB

Film Review

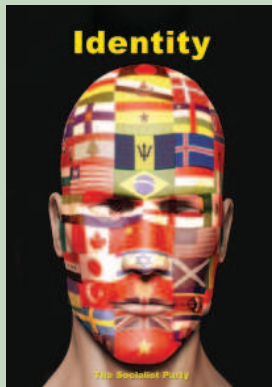
London Labour Film Festival Gala-Film 'Les neiges du Kilimandjaro' September 2012



The TUC-sponsored London Labour Film Festival gala-film was the French film *Les neiges du Kilimandjaro* (2011). The film is directed by Robert Guediguian, and stars Jean-Pierre Darroussin as Michel, a CGT trade union official in the Marseilles shipyard.

The film opens in the shipyard, and the struggle between capital and labour sees

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Identity

Examines and debunks ideas of nationalism

Questions and Answers About Socialism

Answers questions non-members often ask about socialism and The Socialist Party

the union 'choosing' by lot those who will be made redundant. Later Christophe, one of those made redundant, insinuates to Michel there have been many union compromises with management and 'back handers'. For decades the CGT was allied with the Communist Party, and the ossified 'Stalinist' reformism of both undermined the events of 1968. The CGT was more recently involved in strike action in 2005 over the privatisation of the Marseilles maritime ferry service.

Michel mentions the 1972 'Common Programme' which was optimistically seen as the 'union of the left', forming the basis for the Mitterrand Presidential victory in 1981, and reforms to capitalism such as Keynesian economic measures. Michel has achieved a 'good'

standard of living due to the benefits of 'reformism'. He speaks highly to Christophe of the fruits of 'reformism', and in one scene Michel and his wife discuss that they are now 'petty bourgeois'. During capitalism's periodic crises, the workers' wages decrease so that Christophe, the young worker who is made redundant with no severance payments, commits a robbery for purely economic need; the proceeds are used to buy food, pay the rent, and look after his younger brothers.

Michel's hero is the pre-WWI reformist social democrat politician Jean Jaurès whose picture is on his work locker and he refers to him several times in the film. Jaurès advocated 'popular front' alliances with the progressive

middle class. When WWI threatened in 1914 he tried to implement the Second International anti-war policy but was assassinated. Mitterrand placed a red rose on Jaurès' tomb in 1981.

Jaurès's reformism was opposed by Jules Guesde's 'Marxist' party whose manifesto had been drawn up by Marx and Engels. In 1905 Guesde's party and Jaurès's party united under pressure from the Second International and Guesde soon got bogged down in reformism. In 1914 he joined the French government of 'National Unity' although in 1907 he had declared war was the 'result of the capitalist regime'. Had he not been assassinated no doubt Jaurès would have too.

Michel is imbued with an 'Idealist, reformist, social democratic' philosophy and the sense of 'justice' shared by Jaurès. Marxists see 'justice' as a concept originating in class society but Jaurès believed that the Idea of 'justice' causes the movement of history. Paul Lafargue critiqued Jaurès and 'justice' in his 1895 lecture *Idealism and Materialism in the Conception of History*: 'Man never would have emerged from the primitive communist environment in which the idea of Justice does not exist'. Michel believes his conduct is guided by 'justice' but Lafargue sees that 'the idea of Justice will vanish like a bad dream when common property shall have taken the place of private property'.

STEVE CLAYTON



The Magic And History Tour

FIVE CREATIONISTS must have thought their prayers had been answered when they were offered a free holiday – a road trip across the

west coast of America, from Los Angeles

to San Francisco. The catch was that on the way they would meet with heathen scientists to dispute their wacky views, and that they would risk humiliation by a BBC3 camera crew. *Creationism: Conspiracy Road Trip* began with the five fundamentalists being taken 'on a wing and a prayer' in a plane above the Grand Canyon. There, they met with a geologist who explained how the canyon was carved out over millions of years, and not a mere 4,000 years ago when 'the Great Flood' receded. Next, their coach took them to Lake Powell in Utah, where another scientist described how it would be impossible to squeeze 16,000 animals (presumably including dinosaurs) on Noah's Ark and still make it float. Driving on to the University of California in Berkeley, the prickly question of

incest in Adam and Eve's immediate family was met with blank looks and feeble responses.

Unfortunately, the debate between creationism and science isn't about objectively weighing-up the evidence for opposing beliefs. As some of the less blinkered creationists recognised, having faith is usually like holding up a 'no entry' sign to scientific evidence, however persuasive. One of the programme's own 'experts' – a Christian palaeontologist – realised that you can't reconcile the view that humans co-existed with dinosaurs with the fact that their fossilised remains have never been found together. Believing in creationism is like believing that *The Flintstones* was a fly-on-the-wall documentary. So, many creationists hang on to their views by just refusing to accept the evidence. Being confronted by this caused one or two of those on the road trip to be driven up the wall. This made for an increasingly bumpy ride, with TV-friendly tears and awkward

accusations of bullying. Suspecting a set-up, steely-faced participant Phil challenged the director, engineered a split among the others and became paranoid about the motives of even the Christians they met on the journey. As a reasonable discussion of differing views, this road trip stalled and then spluttered to a halt.

Mike Foster



Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

East Anglia

Saturday **10 November** 2 - 5pm

Why Not Utopia? A forum discussion with Barbara Goodwin (Professor of Politics, UEA) and Pat Deutz (The Socialist Party) Nelson Hotel (opposite the train station), Prince of Wales Road, NR1 1DX (The meeting room can be accessed by going through the Costa Coffee Café and down the stairs. The room is towards the Prince of Wales Road end) All welcome.)

Saturday **24 November**

12noon: informal chat / branch business

1pm - 2pm: meal

2pm - 4pm: branch business

Quebec Tavern, 93-97 Quebec Road, Norwich NR1 4HY

London

Sunday **11 November** 6pm

UNPATRIOTIC HISTORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Author James Heartfield on his new book (www.heartfield.org)

Socialist Party premises, 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN.

Sunday **25 November** 6pm

Hip Hop and the Class Struggle

Speaker: Ed Mann

Socialist Party premises, 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN.

Glasgow

Wednesday **21 November** at 8.30pm

THE CURSE OF NATIONALISM

Speaker: R. Donnelly

Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 2YE

Chiswick

Tuesday **20 November** 8pm

THE CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, W4 4JN

Manchester

Monday **26 November** 8pm

AFFLUENZA AND SELFISH

CAPITALISM

Unicorn, Church Street, City Centre, M4 1PW

Doncaster

Saturday **8 December** 2pm

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Ukrainian Centre, 48 Beckett Road, Doncaster DN2 4AD (about 20 minutes walk north-east from Doncaster rail station)

SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2011

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Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do

not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be

converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

50 Years Ago

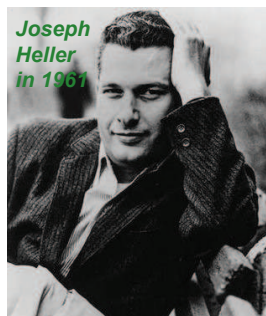
A plea for human survival

CATCH-22, by Joseph Heller. Jonathan Cape, 18s.

This is a brilliant, powerful, bitter book.

The military machine is one of capitalism's ugliest children. Ugly not only because it is a killer machine, but also because of the discipline, stupidity and wastefulness which its killer motive compels it to have. Some workers glory in these things. They never forget their days in the Forces; they join ex-service men's associations, parade in their earner; medals, perpetuate the slang they learned in the Nissen huts.

CATCH-22 looks at all this with the searing eye of remorseless satire.



Joseph Heller in 1961

(...) Joseph Heller is another of the people who, without being Socialists, can compose impressive indictments of capitalism. He is a writer of enormous

impact, who constructs and times his sentences to perfection. He can make us laugh and he can grip us horrified with sensitive, compulsive prose. His description of Yossarian brooding through Rome, watching human behaviour decay all around him, will haunt us for a long time. All in all he makes the post-war wave of British novelists, with their startling discovery that a lot of people under capitalism have to work for their living and that in their spare time they sometimes get drunk and have illicit sexual relations, look pretty sick. (...)

At the moment, Catch 22 is sweeping the United States, where cars carry window-stickers which say "Better Yossarian Than Rotarian." Nobody need think, because of that, that if capitalism throws up another world war the people who have laughed at, been moved by, and agreed with Heller's book will not turn the required mental somersault and join up with a will. We know now that working class ignorance runs that deep.

For all that, Catch-22 deserves to be read and to find its place among the books which stand out against the lie that war is romantic and glorious and necessary but which say unmistakably that the people have nothing to gain from war and that war is sordid and obscene and futile.

(From review by Ivan, *Socialist Standard*, November 1962)

ACTION REPLAY

Inheritance tactics

WE WERE assured that it was also about what happened after the frantic few weeks of competition: "As well as the physical legacy of the London 2012 Games ... new initiatives and programmes are creating sustainable social, economic and sporting legacies at home in the UK and around the world" (<http://www.london2012.com/>). But there are many reasons for thinking that the Olympics and Paralympics won't quite be the success the organisers had in mind.

For a start, the Games themselves are unlikely to do more than break even, which makes earlier spats about how to share out the profits look beside the point.

Shops did not do well, either. Sales overall fell during the Games period according to the British Retail Consortium especially in central London where transport and other problems led many people to stay away. Free parking was introduced in the West End for a

couple of weekends to try to reverse these trends. Hornby lost £1m on their Olympic-branded toys, after "retailers lost confidence in many categories of London 2012 merchandise", as the company put it.

Even hotels, theatres and restaurants fared badly as people stayed away from London, fearing overcrowding and inflated prices. Tourism in other parts of Britain suffered too, as tour groups that might have visited London and, say, the Lake District, preferred not to come to Britain at all.

As for the sporting legacy, the vast sums spent on top athletes were not matched by similar largesse for facilities aimed at 'the public'. Almost two-thirds of adults don't take part in sport even once a week, and current austerity cuts are reducing sporting facilities even more. George Osborne was booed at the Paralympics as the government sets out to replace the Disability Living Allowance with even stingier payments.

With London mayor Boris Johnson having put himself in charge of future developments at the Olympic Park, no doubt what happens there will be a combination of making a profit and providing a chance for yet more self-

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A Fruit And Nut Case

Capitalism is a social system based on class ownership, and sections of the owning class are always in disputes over this ownership. They have legal battles, sometimes leading to military battles, over the ownership and access to sources of raw materials and markets. Recently there has been a legal dispute over the ownership of a particular colour. 'Is chocolate the first thing you think of when you see Pantone 2685C? It might be if I tell you that it is the technical name for Cadbury Dairy Milk's distinctive purple. And it does indeed 'belong' to Cadbury, after a decision in the High Court yesterday that the confectioner's purple packaging constitutes a trademark' (*Times*, 2 October). This dispute arose over Cadbury's rival Nestlé's objection to Cadbury registering the colour as a trademark in 2004. Nestlé had already lost in 2008 but decided to appeal the judgement of the Registrar of Trade Marks. Only capitalism with its emphasis on ownership could have highly trained legal minds battling for years over who 'owns' a colour. Madness.

The Whip Hand

Whenever there is a slump and mass unemployment, the employers' hand is strengthened, as a recent report from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development shows: 'Millions of workers are 'too frightened' about losing their job to take time off work when they are sick, even if they are very ill, a report reveals today. The authoritative report says a culture of 'presenteeism' is sweeping Britain as workers decide to come into the office, rather than stay home in bed. A third of bosses have seen an increase in the number of workers 'who struggle into work when unwell' over the last year, according to the report from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development' (*Daily Mail*, 9 October).

Some Good News

Every day in the newspapers socialists can read all the bad news that capitalism throws up. Millions starve while food is destroyed; children dying for lack of clean water; and lately a 14-year-old girl shot in the head by some Pakistani religious zealot because she dared to attend a school. So what is the good news? 'The number of people with no religious affiliations is growing at an unprecedented rate, according to research. A third of adults under 30 in the US now say they have no faith. The US study was undertaken by the Pew Research Centre, a Washington based think tank. According to the latest British Social Attitude Survey, published last month, religious affiliation among Britons has fallen from 68 per cent in 1983 to 53 per cent in 2011' (*Times*, 10 October).

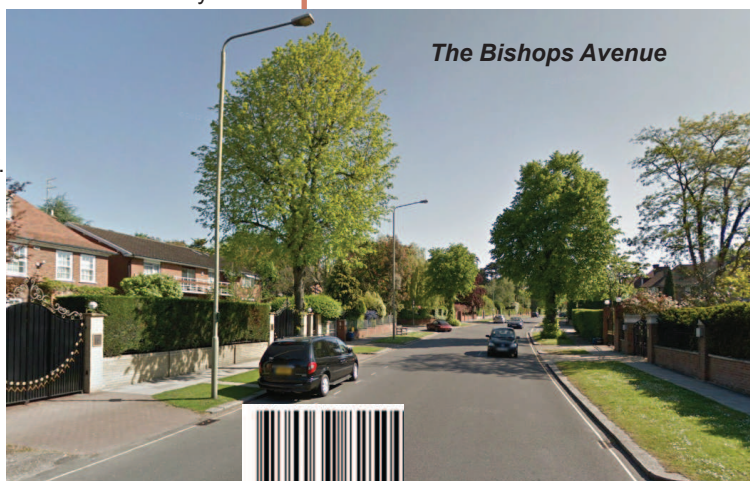
A Deadly Social System

In its unending drive for more and more profit the capitalist system ruins lives but it also ruins the world's environment and biodiversity. 'Reducing the risk of extinction for threatened species and establishing protected areas for nature will cost the world over \$76bn dollars annually. Researchers say it is needed to meet globally agreed conservation targets by 2020. The scientists say the daunting number is just a fifth of what the world spends on soft drinks annually. And it amounts to just 1% of the value of ecosystems being lost every year, they report in the journal *Science*. Back in 2002,

governments around the world agreed that they would achieve a significant reduction in biodiversity loss by 2010. But the deadline came and went and the rate of loss increased' (*BBC News*, 12 October). Governments can make sympathetic noises and even pass pious resolutions but profit making comes before biodiversity so more and more species of flora and fauna are doomed.

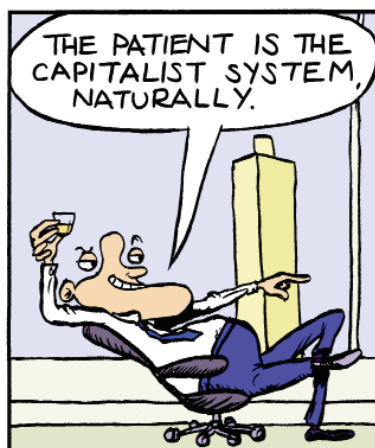
Recession? What Recession?

During the current economic recession it is commonplace to hear of workers being unable to sell their houses because of tumbling prices and difficulties in obtaining mortgages, but one part of the housing market is unaffected by economic difficulties. 'An estate agent to the rich and famous is celebrating after selling £3 billion worth of property – on the same London street. Trevor Abrahmsohn has cornered the market on one of the world's wealthiest roads, The Bishops Avenue in Hampstead Garden Suburb, north London – known as 'Billionaires' Row'. Over the last 35 years he has handled 150 house sales on the street at an average value of £20million at today's prices' (*Daily Mail*, 12 October). To those members of the owning class who think nothing of spending £20 million on a house there is no economic crisis.



The Bishops Avenue

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